REPORT ON THE WORKSHOP ON INCORPORATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN THE MONTAÑA REGION OF THE STATE OF GUERRERO, MEXICO

(Tlapa, State of Guerrero, Mexico, 7 and 8 November 1991)
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Introduction

1. This report gives a basic account of the workshop on the incorporation of environmental concerns into development planning in the Montaña region of the State of Guerrero, Mexico, conducted in Tlapa, State of Guerrero, on 7 and 8 November 1991.

2. The workshop was organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the government of the State of Guerrero.

3. The workshop was conducted within the framework of technical cooperation for environmental planning and management in Latin America and the Caribbean, a project carried out by the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit, which is part of the Environment and Human Settlements Division of ECLAC.
I. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

4. Since 1991, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and UNEP have been involved in a joint project on technical cooperation in environmental planning and management in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is a project carried out by the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit.

5. The project's objective is, inter alia, to support the elaboration of environmentally sustainable agricultural development plans for mountainous areas.

6. With a view to formulating general policies and, at the same time, making a specific contribution, the project was developed on the basis of three case studies in seriously impoverished high-altitude rural agricultural areas.

7. The government of the State of Guerrero, Mexico, expressed its interest in having these studies conducted in the Montaña region of Guerrero.

8. ECLAC, in turn, set up a joint project with the Programme for Integral Natural Resources Exploitation (Programa de Aprovechamiento Integral de Recursos Naturales - PAIR) of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), since its scientific and technical team had experience in this area.

9. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss with the local community the document prepared by the project, the State of Guerrero and the PAIR-UNAM programme on factors for the incorporation of environmental concerns into development planning in the Montaña region of the State of Guerrero.
II. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Date, place and attendance

10. The workshop was held on 7 and 8 November 1991 in the city of Tlapa, Montaña region, State of Guerrero at the headquarters of the Instituto Nacional Indígena.

11. Thirty persons participated, representing municipal, state and central government agencies, the Ecology Division of the Ministry of Urban Development and Ecology (SEDUE), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (SARH).

Opening meeting

12. At the opening ceremony, the inaugural address was delivered by Mr. Enrique Camarillo Balcázar, Chief Municipal Official (President Municipal Constitucional) of Tlapa. Mr. Nicolo Gligo, Coordinator of the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit, addressed the participants on behalf of ECLAC.

Coordination

13. The workshop sessions and discussions were coordinated by Mrs. Julia Carabias and Mr. Enrique Provencio, Mr. Rafael Obregón and Mr. Carlos Toledo, members of the PAIR-UNAM Programme.

Workshop format

14. The workshop was based on group discussions of the various topics introduced by ECLAC consultants and PAIR-UNAM researchers.

Agenda

15. The workshop addressed the following topics:

a) Diagnostic study:

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1 See list of participants in annex I.
- Development initiatives in mountainous ecosystems
- Main environmental conflicts
- Main components of regional policy

b) Strategy and management orientations and proposals:

- Definitions and global strategies for sustainable development of mountainous regions;
- Environmental management and strategies for changing production patterns as they relate to conservation-production

c) Specific, more relevant policies:

- Public expenditure policy
- Institutional reform for sustainable development
- Credit policy
- Marketing
- Ecological management and agrarian situation
- Technological development.
III. SUMMARY OF DEBATES

16. The workshop participants endorsed the background material and proposals contained in the basic document. In the workshop debates, the topics examined below were considered to be the most important.

17. The workshop participants said that four vital factors must be taken into account in launching an environmentally sustainable development programme in the Montaña region: investment, production structure, technology and environmental management.

18. Investment should be channelled towards making the necessary changes in production patterns and equipping the region with infrastructure, especially roads and bulking centres. Workshop participants, especially residents of the area, reiterated the need for changing production patterns to serve as the basis for development planning in the Montaña region, and ruled out treating it as a poverty zone solely in need of social action and assistance.

19. With regard to the production structure, there was a need for innovative territorial planning that introduced more profitable agricultural systems with low environmental impact. Since investments in irrigation works must be made simultaneously with the introduction of new agricultural systems, the need to do a much more exhaustive evaluation of water resources was pointed out.

20. New agricultural systems must put a stop to environmental conflicts resulting from the disruption of ecosystems without regard for conservation measures. In that connection, it was pointed out that, if present levels of poverty persisted, it would be impossible to introduce more sustainable methods. Beyond a stable system of natural resources ownership, a conservation policy would require ad hoc economic and financial policies, including outright transfers and subsidies.

21. In reference to technology, the workshop addressed the need to invest more resources in research and dissemination, not in a broad sense but rather with a specific focus on rural society. Emphasis was placed on the importance of further exploring techniques with built-in conservation measures, such as "tlacolole" agriculture (a traditional indigenous system) —and on the need to do research on fertilizers, since the best-known types were not being properly used. New crops, the development of aquaculture and forestry products must be considered as well.

22. Environmental management must flow from the implementation of the above-mentioned policies and the express decision of planning and management agencies to implement it.

23. Credit was a mainstay of the rural economy. While it should maintained as a financing facility for the rural population, it must also be reorganized, and new lines of credit that conformed to environmental policy should be opened.
24. With regard to the land ownership policy, emphasis was placed on the urgent need to finalize the corporate property ownership system and legalize the situation of many properties whose ownership was undetermined. The question was raised as to whether such redistribution should receive the necessary financial support from the Regional Agriculture and Labour Bank.

25. A number of speakers drew attention to the fact that the low level of development bred political clientage systems and opportunities for manipulation, which ended up discrediting social organizations and creating rifts in the rural population.

26. Lastly, it was recommended that the conclusions of the seminar organized by ECLAC and the Government of the State of Guerrero in Chilpancingo should be submitted for consideration by the authorities and that it should serve as a means of continuing the debate on an environmentally sustainable development strategy for the Montaña region of Guerrero.
Annex I

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